

# VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION ACTIVITY (PREVI) Quarterly Progress Report – Q2 FY 21

<b>Contract Number:</b>	
Contract Number.	

Activity Start Date and End Date: August 11, 2020 to August 10, 2024

**Total Estimated Cost:** 

**COR Name:** Ninive Cruz

Submitted by:

, Chief of Party

Chemonics International Inc.

1717 H Street, NW Washington, DC 20006

Email:

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#### **DISCLAIMER**

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# **Acronyms**

APEA Applied Political Economic Analysis

CSO Civil Society Organization

EBP Escala de Buenas Practicas (Good Practice Scale)

FY Fiscal Year

GESI Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

HPJC Herramienta Diagnostica de Policia y Justicia Civica (Evaluation Tool for

Police and Civic Justice)

IPA Innovations for Poverty Action

MEL Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning NPCJM National Policing and Civic Justice Model

Q2 Quarter Two

ROLE Recursos, Opciones y Libertad de Expresion (Resources, Options and Liberty

of Expression)

RFA Request for Applications
RFP Request for Proposals

USAID United States Agency for International Development

USAID/PREVI United States Agency for International Development's Violence Prevention

and Reduction Activity

V&C Violence and Crime YTT Youth Targeting Tool

# **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary	3
2. Context Analysis	4
3. Monitoring	5
4. Accomplishments and Overall Status	7
5. Problems and Delays (and/or Lessons Learned)	9
6. Major Activities or Corrective Actions	10
7. Updates on Evaluation and Learning Plans or Activities	10
8. Environmental Compliance	10
9. Financial Projections Report	11
10. Participant Training	11
11. Partnerships Report	11
12. Annexes	11
Annex A. Supplemental Operations Section	11
Annex B. Supplemental Subcontracts and Grants Section	11
Annex C. Monthly Success Story	

#### 1. Executive Summary

Activity Name	Violence Prevention and Reduction Activity (PREVI)
Activity Start and End Date	August 11, 2020 to August 10, 2024
Activity Purpose	Strengthen the capacity of municipal governments and communities to effectively resolve and mitigate local crime and violence by shifting the focus away from punitive justice to preventive and proactive civic justice and policing consistent with the Government of Mexico's Modelo Nacional de Policia y Justicia Civica (National Policing and Civic Justice Model).
Activity Description	PREVI is a four-year Activity that will strengthen the capacities of local actors to expand civic justice, including one of its main components: using evidence-based interventions for secondary and tertiary violence and crime prevention. Moreover, the Activity will foster information sharing among criminal justice operators and municipal law enforcement to facilitate an increase in crime reports.
Geographic Areas	The Activity's civic justice components will be carried out at the municipal level, while information sharing work will engage state-level public institutions. The geography of intervention are 32 municipalities located in eleven states: Baja California, Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Colima, Jalisco, Michoacan, Nuevo Leon, Queretaro, Quintana Roo, and Sonora. Moreover, USAID/PREVI's technical assistance will be expanded to other states where political and local conditions are deemed to be auspicious.

This document is the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Violence Prevention and Reduction Activity (hereafter "USAID/PREVI" or the "Activity") progress report for quarter two of fiscal year 2021 (Q2 FY 21). The purpose of USAID/PREVI is to support violence and crime (V&C) prevention and reduction efforts in Mexico through evidence-based interventions that leverage local systems, foster innovation, and mainstream a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) perspective. To achieve its purpose, the Activity has three objectives:

- Municipal authorities, in collaboration with civil society and the private sector, use evidencebased interventions to respond to low-level crimes and community violence that reduce imprisonment and build public confidence in institutions.
- 2. Reduce likelihood of at-risk youth being imprisoned or on probation for crime and violence.
- 3. Improve coordination between civic justice courts, municipal law enforcement, and criminal justice operators through shared information and intelligence cooperation.

During the reporting period, the Activity obtained USAID's technical concurrence on its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan and submitted a request to modify its contract. Moreover, the Activity had its official launch in February 2021 and has formally initiated contact and collaboration with local actors.

In addition, USAID/PREVI began setting the foundations for its four-year implementation strategy by updating and developing tools that will serve to inform its capacity building strategy. This is the case of the Youth Targeting Tool (YTT), YTT-Tertiary Prevention, the Good Practice Scale (EBP, per its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> During the reporting quarter, work with Queretaro has been put on hold per the request of USAID.

Spanish acronym) and the Evaluation Tool [for police and civic justice] (HPJC, per its Spanish acronym). Additionally, USAID/PREVI began its field implementation by selecting five grantees that will serve individuals going through the civic justice system, initiating the development of training materials, and designing the mentoring program for municipalities implementing civic justice.

USAID/PREVI devoted much of the quarter's efforts to exploring context analysis methodologies, such as the Applied Political Economic Analysis (APEA) and streamlining administrative activities, which is evidenced in the lessons learned presented in this report. Overall, the Activity has invested in the development of technically-sound tools and local partnerships to ensure effective implementation throughout the years.

#### 2. Context Analysis

During Q2 FY 21, changes in the implementing context have been identified around federal and local legislation, pre-electoral campaigns, and the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of the local developments is explained next:

#### Developments in federal and local legislation

In March 2021, the Senate endorsed a decree to amend the Constitution, specifically Articles 5, 17, 21 and 73, to incorporate civic justice as one of the main instruments for V&C prevention at the municipal level.<sup>2</sup> The proposed amendment intends to formalize the use of community service as an administrative sanction, as well as to limit the use of arrests to penalize misdemeanors. If passed by Congress, the Congress has up to 180 days to publish a General Law on civic justice. The proposed amendment is significant and positive for municipal governments with which USAID/PREVI collaborates, as it provides legal certainty for municipalities to use community service without it being perceived as a form of unpaid labor. Moreover, it points to the appropriation of civic justice at all levels of government and across government branches.

Also in March, the Mexican Congress approved a bill that seeks to legalize the recreational use of marijuana by creating a Federal Law for the Regulation of Cannabis and reforming the General Law on Health and the Federal Criminal Code.<sup>3</sup> This bill must be reviewed and approved by the Senate before entering into force, and, if approved by both chambers, it would require state legislatures to standardize their Criminal Codes accordingly. However, municipal regulations, under which civic justice is overseen, should not be impacted, as these do not look into substance use in private spaces. Therefore, behaviors such as public consumption of cannabis and committing an offense in a state of intoxication will still be penalized according to municipal-level legislation.

At the local level, in March, the municipality of Hermosillo reformed its Police and Good Government Edict (Bando de Policia y Buen Gobierno)4 to include aspects of the National Policing and Civic Justice Model (NPCJM). With this update in its local regulations, the municipality has mandated the establishment of public hearings, the use of community policing, and the prioritization of alternative measures to sanctions. With this development, USAID/PREVI's work becomes more relevant in Hermosillo and adds to the regulatory foundation on which the Activity's efforts are built.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See the official communiqué <u>here</u> (in Spanish).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See this and this article, in Spanish, or this in English.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See this news article, in Spanish, detailing the new legislation.

#### **Local elections**

As mentioned in the previous quarterly report, local dynamics are heavily influenced by the elections that will be held in June 2021 throughout most of Mexico.<sup>5</sup> Evidence of this is the fact that most of the mayors<sup>6</sup> in the Activity's target municipalities have requested leave of absence to participate in political campaigns, appointing interim representatives without decision-making power to interact with the Activity. In the case of La Paz, Baja California Sur, the municipality's liaison with USAID/PREVI even resigned to join a political campaign, leaving the Activity temporarily without a point of contact.

Given the great implications of electoral processes in Mexico, USAID/PREVI carried out an APEA looking into the impact of the results on programmatic objectives and activities. More information on the process and stage of this endeavor is presented under Risk Monitoring in the following section.

#### **Pandemic**

Following the peak in infection rates that occurred in the previous quarter, COVID-19 cases in the country have consistently gone down. By the end of the reporting period, no entity in Mexico was in the highest level of epidemiological alert, with most of the territory being deemed at low or medium-low risk.<sup>7</sup> On a global scale, the country is now third in the world by total number of deaths, being behind the United States of America and Brazil.<sup>8</sup> Given the continuation of the public health emergency, staying-at-home and social-distancing continue to be the official recommendations.

#### 3. Monitoring

During Q2 FY 21, the Activity obtained USAID's technical concurrence on its MEL Plan and has submitted a request to modify its contract accordingly. While program performance indicators have been identified, no progress has been recorded during the reporting period. Therefore, the enclosed Indicator summary table has values of zero for the quarter. Nevertheless, USAID/PREVI initiated work on data collection methods to measure key performance indicators, more information on which is presented below in Section 4. Accomplishments and Overall Status.

#### **Risk Monitoring**

To ensure that the Activity attains its objective, USAID/PREVI keeps track of elements and conditions that may hinder its implementation. To monitor these changes, USAID/PREVI relies on its interaction with local partners, media analysis, and—as an innovation for this quarter—the use of APEA.

The first identified risk during the quarter relates to collaboration from operational personnel across partner government agencies and institutions. Given the systemic nature of the Activity, USAID/PREVI relies on local buy-in to carry out planned activities and reach its goals. During the reporting quarter, operational personnel from the municipalities of Nuevo Leon and Chihuahua reduced their engagement with the Actvity, slowing down activities previously agreed upon with the heads of the municipal government. Likewise, and as identified in its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See this map presenting the type of election held in each state (in Spanish).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The municipalities where mayors requested leave are:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See <u>this</u> article presenting the epidemiological risk levels of all states in the country (in Spanish).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See the World Health Organization's Coronavirus Disease <u>Dashboard</u> (data updated in real time).

Annual Work Plan, USAID/PREV has faced reluctancy on the part of police analysis units and prosecutor's offices to share information for intelligence purposes. While this behavior was expected, the Activity will continue looking for incentives that will promote collaborative work on the matter.

The second risk that the Activity faced was the ongoing electoral campaign. Following the recommendations and trends promoted at a global level by USAID, the Activity has integrated the Thinking and Working Politically<sup>9</sup> approach, which is interested in exploring and understanding in greater detail the context in which a program is being implemented. To operationalize this analytical approach, USAID/PREVI carried out an APEA to analyze the implications of the upcoming elections on the Activity's activities and goals. The main objective of this exercise was to test the pertinence of the methodology as a permanent tool for USAID/PREVI.

#### USAID/PREVI's APEA was guided by the following research protocol:

General objective	Obtain detailed information that can guide USAID/PREVI's implementation
	strategy in advance of electoral results in selected municipalities.
Geographic focus	Municipalities that will have activities in all three of USAID/PREVI's
	objectives in the next year. These municipalities are Los Cabos and La
	Paz, Baja California Sur; Morelia, Michoacan; Chihuahua, Chihuahua; and
	the Monterrey Metropolitan Area, Nuevo Leon.
Research question	How exposed are the justice systems, in particular the programs within
	these systems with which USAID/PREVI interacts directly, to political
	changes and pre-electoral uncertainty?
Analytical focus:	Relates to the capacity of justice systems to maintain their financial and
protection	operational integrity.
Analytical focus:	Relates to the interest, support, and commitment (or lack thereof) of each
traction	political party in the areas of interest to USAID/PREVI.
Analytical focus:	Relates to the political association or neutrality of decision makers in
affiliation	charge of the programs of interest to USAID/PREVI, as well as the
	influence of political parties in the appointment of public officials to the
	programs of interest.

To inform the APEA, USAID/PREVI interviewed 49 local actors from the regions of interest and analyzed the data using standard qualitative methods, as well as qualitative statistical tools. To ensure that a GESI perspective was included in the analysis, the Activity invited actors working for the protection of vulnerable or historically excluded groups to listen to their knowledge and experience—these accounted for 13 of the interviews. During the analysis of results, USAID/PREVI looked for specific questions regarding candidates' support for specialized service provision or public policy reform that address women's, children's, or indigenous groups' needs. The results are still being processed, and a summary of the findings will be sent to USAID in the upcoming quarter.

#### Mainstreaming systemic thinking

In the context of electoral campaigns in Mexico, USAID/PREVI leverages its systemic thinking to ensure its work is not stopped by a temporary divergence of attention in the public sector. For instance, in the municipalities of Benito Juarez, Quintana Roo; Chihuahua, Chihuahua; Colima, Colima; Morelia, Michoacan; and the Monterrey Metropolitan Area, Nuevo Leon, USAID/PREVI has reached out to groups and organizations backed by the private sector to promote the Activity's agenda among candidates. In this way, USAID/PREVI seeks to incentivize the participation of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Based on this USAID document.

elected officials through the influence of non-government actors and, thus, to rapidly initiate collaboration with the new administration.

# 4. Accomplishments and Overall Status

During the reporting period, USAID/PREVI publicly announced the initiation of its work and began foundational work to support its evidence-informed strategy for V&C prevention. This work has intentionally been collaborative and participatory to increase the chances of sustainable and systemic change.

#### **USAID/PREVI's official launch**

To officially initiate its operation, on February 9, USAID and the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System held a virtual event where over 20 mayors representing USAID/PREVI's target municipalities expressed their commitment to the Activity's objectives. In addition to this event, USAID/PREVI held smaller virtual presentations addressed to individual municipalities, where operational teams and representatives of strategic areas of civic courts and the police reached initial collaboration agreements with the Activity.

#### **Development of data collection tools**

During the reporting period, USAID/PREVI began developing tools that will guide its capacity-building strategy and measure any changes that result from these efforts. For instance, instruments previously developed by USAID, such as the YTT, the YTT-Tertiary Prevention, and the EBP were put under review to improve their technical validity. The YTT and YTT-Tertiary Prevention are to be shared among civil society organizations (CSOs) and public institutions working with at-risk youth and youth in conflict with the law, respectively, to assess the profile of beneficiaries and use that information to identify the intervention that will most effectively respond to the individual's needs. Conversely, the EBP is used to evaluate a V&C prevention model's technical foundation and capacity to demonstrate its effectiveness. While these characteristics make the EBP a tool for recognizing promising interventions worthy of scaling or replication, it also provides a blueprint for low-scoring models to improve their evidence base and performance. Hence, USAID/PREVI will use this instrument to assess its grantee's initiatives and inform the development of capacity building plans. Moreover, the Activity will carry out a second EBP evaluation at the end of the grant period to measure the effectiveness of its technical assistance.

In the domain of civic justice, during Q2 FY 21, USAID/PREVI developed an Evaluation Tool (HPJC, 10 per its Spanish acronym) that will be used to calculate the level of implementation of the NPCJM in a given municipality. The HPJC evaluates components such as: Community Policing and Problem-Oriented Policing, attention to victims and reception of complaints, and information analysis, among others. Based on HPJC results, USAID/PREVI will create technical assistance plans to strengthen the local civic justice model. To test the validity and reliability of the HPJC, USAID/PREVI invited the authorities of Colima; Chihuahua; and Chih

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> In Spanish: Herramienta Diagnóstica de Policía y Justicia Cívica.

In addition to working on tools that will assist in the Activity's implementation, during the reporting quarter, USAID/PREVI began working on tools that will remain in the local system. For example, USAID/PREVI started developing methodologies to monitor the processes and results of the civic and criminal justice systems—statistics that are currently not collected systematically. Within civic justice, USAID/PREVI will gather information on the proportion of alternative non-custodial measures determined by civic courts as an indicator of the judges' endorsement of alternative measures as effective preventative mechanisms for disorderly behavior. Moreover, the Activity will measure recidivism rates in criminal and civic justice to evaluate the effectiveness of institutional processes and provision of services. To ensure that data is collected periodically and with the highest quality standards, USAID/PREVI began assessing current information flows and started designing data collection tools and methods for all stakeholders to adapt and use for their benefit. USAID/PREVI is thus seeking to create methodologies that are technically sound, but also match local stakeholders' capacities and resources; this will increase uptake and promote long-term measurement of the statistics. The proposed methodologies will be finalized in the next quarter.

#### Field implementation

In Q2 FY 21, USAID/PREVI contributed to its capacity building efforts by signing subcontracts to update training materials for police officers and civic justice operators. The Activity seeks to integrate the policing component into all previously developed civic justice training materials, as well as to integrate the GESI perspective. To maximize the geographic reach of its trainings, as well as to comply with social-distancing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, USAID/PREVI also began developing an online platform to host the courses and other tools to evaluate progress made by municipalities.

Moreover, to expand the implementation of civic justice to a greater number of municipalities in Mexico and to consolidate a peer-to-peer network of practical experiences, USAID/PREVI started designing a mentoring program for municipalities implementing the NPCJM. To test the methods before rolling out the initiative, USAID/PREVI has selected and and to be part of a pilot exercise, with other municipalities still being identified. With this initiative, by the end of the Activity, USAID/PREVI will have endowed municipalities with the tools necessary to support fellow local governments with the implementation of civic justice; all without the need for external support.

In Q2 FY 21, the Activity launched its first call for proposals to support CSOs that can serve offenders going through the civic justice system in eleven regions in eight states. <sup>11</sup> The purpose of the call is for organizations with technical and institutional capacities to implement evidence-based models to reduce the probability of offenders who have gone through the civic court system to commit another offense and, at the same time, ensure the individual's successful integration into society. From this call for applications, USAID/PREVI received 14 proposals, of which five projects were selected. The grants will start in Q3 FY 21, with an initial assessment of their technical strength and evidence-generation capacity using the EBP, for a total duration of 18 months.

It is important to highlight, however, that USAID/PREVI decided not to award any grants in due to the insufficient technical quality of proposals received. To ensure that the Activity receives appropriate proposals in these regions of implementation, USAID/PREVI will carry out an outreach campaign and a series of workshops to guide CSOs in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> The areas of interest were: Mexicali, Baja California; La Paz and Los Cabos, Baja California Sur, the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area and Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco; Colima, Colima; Morelia, Michoacan; the Monterrey Metropolitan Area, Nuevo Leon; Benito Juarez and Solidaridad, Quintana Roo; and Hermosillo, Sonora.

drafting of proposals. More information on this challenge and mitigation actions are presented in sections 5 and 6 below.

USAID/PREVI's theory of change relies on multisectoral collaboration to reach desired change. Therefore, much of the Activity's first-year strategy relates to building partnerships and creating the local buy-in necessary for effective implementation. During the reporting quarter, USAID/PREVI has identified new actors and potential allies in Chihuahua, Chihuahua; La Paz and Los Cabos, Baja California Sur; the Monterrey Metropolitan Area, Nuevo Leon; and Morelia, Michoacan. The first direct contact by USAID/PREVI with local actors outside the public sector was through the APEA interview process, where the Activity also had the chance to introduce its working agenda to these actors. Beyond initial interactions, USAID/PREVI initiated collaborative work regarding civic justice and at-risk youth with the Mesa Metropoli Monterrey. Similarly, the Activity worked with the Council of the Sub-Commission for Reintegration of Nuevo Leon to identify areas of partnership regarding the social reintegration of youth in conflict with the law. Conversely, in Morelia, Michoacan and Colima, Colima, USAID/PREVI started negotiations with the private sector, specifically with the COPARMEX branches for Michoacan and Colima, to take part in civic justice initiatives. In upcoming quarters, the Activity will escalate and densify its network of partners across all target municipalities to continue with its work plan across objectives.

## 5. Problems and Delays (and/or Lessons Learned)

During the reporting period, USAID/PREVI learned the following:

- In an online setting, the Activity needs to anticipate and address complications, such as weak internet connections or public officials' lack of familiarity with virtual platforms. After facing technological complications during the pilot of the HPJC, USAID/PREVI has included preparatory meetings in its protocol, where logistical requirements are explained, and potential issues are identified and resolved. The objective is to ensure that the three- or four-hour long assessment is carried out smoothly without technological issues.
- Facing changes in office holders due to the electoral campaigns, and given strict vetting requirements, USAID/PREVI must strategically select public officials to be trained and offer initial guidance on filing for the vetting process. Given that vetting is a prerequisite for the provision of training to public officials, and considering the electoral process, the Activity decided to source training participants from high- to middle-management positions, which will ensure that trained individuals will remain in government regardless of election results. Likewise, the Activity will review in advance the organizational structure of the areas that are going to participate and identify the type of vetting required, after which it will offer guidance to participating public institutions on the documentation required for the vetting process.
- In electoral periods, USAID/PREVI must keep close contact with public officials and
  ensure all agreements are backed through formal documents. Faced with the electoral
  campaigns, USAID/PREVI has intensified its communication with government points of
  contact to remain informed of daily developments and, thus, to be prepared to respond in a
  timely manner. Moreover, the Activity has sought to formalize all communication with public
  counterparts to document any agreements made.

Moreover, the Activity faced the following problems or delays:

- 1. The electoral process in much of the country has made it difficult for the Activity to select municipalities that take part in the mentoring program, as a change in administration may mean a shift in personnel or priorities for local public institutions.

#### 6. Major Activities or Corrective Actions

To respond to the problems identified in the previous section, USAID/PREVI has implemented the following corrective actions:

- 1. To make the mentoring program more attractive to current municipal administrations, USAID/PREVI has adjusted the program's duration and developed progress indicators for local actors to advocate for its continuation after the election. Some examples of the adjustments made are: switching to Google Classroom, an online learning platform that simplifies the interaction between participating municipalities; focusing on fewer elements of the program for the pilot exercise; and the incorporation of a progress matrix to easily identify areas of opportunity and document progress on the matter.
- 2. The Activity is extending its local actor mapping to identify potential partners that could help disseminate the opportunity made available by USAID/PREVI in the framework of its grants program. The objective of this strategy is to showcase the call for applications in specialized groups, formal and informal, to better reach the desired types of organizations. Moreover, USAID/PREVI is planning to carry out a series of workshops aimed at interested organizations to improve the technical and administrative components of their proposals. These workshops are planned for April 2021.

# 7. Updates on Evaluation and Learning Plans or Activities

There are no updates on USAID/PREVI's evaluation or learning agendas.

#### 8. Environmental Compliance

During the reporting quarter, USAID/PREVI did not carry out any activity with a Negative Determination with Conditions under the Initial Environmental Examination. Moreover, all grantees have been provided with a Waste Management Plan to properly dispose electronic and computer equipment.

### **Annex C. Monthly Success Story**

# USAID Held a Nationwide Presentation for its Violence Prevention and Reduction (PREVI) Activity (February 2021)

The PREVI Activity focuses its efforts on mitigating and effectively addressing violence and crime based on the National Police and Civic Justice Model.



PHOTO: USAID PREVI

On February 9, Bruce Abrams, Mission Director of USAID Mexico, delivered remarks in the National Presentation of the PREVI Activity.

"PREVI is an example that shows the institutional structure and commitment to addressing violence and crime of the governments of the USA and Mexico. On a topic as complex as this one, collaborative work is required from all people and institutions at all levels. Through PREVI, we seek to contribute to reducing crime and strengthening security strategies while improving citizens' perception of security and trust in institutions."

 Bruce Abrams, Mission Director of USAID Mexico. From January 20 to February 9, USAID held a series of virtual meetings to present its PREVI Activity, which began operations in August 2020 and will end in August 2024. These presentations were addressed to Mayors, Heads of Units, and liaison and technical staff who are part of the Crime Prevention, Civic Justice, and Public Safety departments. The participants showed great interest in collaborating with the Activity, which will be implemented in 32 Mexican municipalities.

The presentations delved into the scope and impact of the Activity, which seeks to strengthen the capacities of local governments and their communities by shifting the focus away from punitive justice to preventive and proactive civic justice, based on the National Police and Civic Justice Model, promoted from the Federal Government downward. The activities that will be carried out within the Activity will be based on three main objectives: a) provide local support through evidence-based interventions to respond to low-level crimes and community violence; b) reduce the likelihood of at-risk youth being imprisoned or released on parole for violence and crime, and c) improve the coordination and the exchange of information among the civic justice courts, police departments, and criminal justice personnel.

The Mission Director of USAID Mexico, Bruce Abrams, and the Executive Secretary of the National System of Public Safety, Leonel Cota, delivered a warm welcome during the presentation on February 9. Throughout this meeting, both representatives highlighted the importance of collaborating and reiterated their interest in investing in initiatives focused on violence prevention. They also emphasized the significance of working with police departments to develop tasks to prevent, address, and contain violence.

With this series of presentations, USAID reaffirms its commitment to collaborating with municipal and state governments to address the issue of violence in its earliest stages, as well as to generate mechanisms that allow for conflict resolution at the community level. Due to the COVID-19 health protocols, all these presentations were held remotely, which enabled the attendance of more than 350 representatives from 26 municipalities in the states of Baja California, Baja California Sur, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Jalisco, Colima, Michoacan, and Quintana Roo.